

# INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES



## *A guide to SCPS school closing procedures*

It's snowing! Do we have school today? On snowy winter mornings students of all ages across Stafford County may ask this question. How will Stafford County Schools determine whether schools will be closed or delayed? The answer results from many hours of assessment by Stafford County Public School staff.

Stafford County Public Schools Policy 6-10 states "When, in the opinion of the superintendent, conditions exist which might prove hazardous to the safety and welfare of the students and teachers of this division, the superintendent shall have the authority to alter the schedule of the schools—or a school—until such hazardous conditions cease to exist."

Often we are asked, "how did you make the decision to close or not to close schools today?" The process involves many staff members and community organizations. On mornings when inclement weather (snow, ice, rain, hurricanes, etc) is expected or is a possibility, the Stafford County Public Schools' weather operations center opens.

\*At 4:00 a.m. the inclement weather operations center opens.

\*The Sheriff's Office and VDOT are contacted for

updates on current road conditions and any particular areas of concern.

\*The weather operations center staff monitors weather forecasts through a variety of weather sites and contacts other school divisions to determine their opening, closing or delay status.

\*The five member road assessment team drives assigned routes throughout the county determining road conditions and hazards for bus drivers. They are on the road between 4:00 and 5:00 a.m. checking road conditions, school driveways and parking lots. They communicate the road conditions in their sectors to the weather operations center.

\*By 5:15 a.m. the weather operations center staff forms an initial recommendation to open, close, or delay the opening of school and relays this recommendation to the superintendent.

\*By 5:30 a.m. the superintendent makes the final decision regarding opening of schools.

### **At 5:30 a.m.:**

\*The decision to close or delay opening of schools is sent to the Associated Press Wire Service which sends the announcement to all member television and radio stations in the Metro DC area.

\*The information is posted on the School Division website at

[www.staffordschools.net](http://www.staffordschools.net) and on the central office voice mail system at **658-6698** and sent to [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com).

\*Individual media outlets are also contacted regarding school closing status.

\*If the decision is to delay the opening of school, the road assessment team continues to check the road conditions. The weather operations center staff continues to monitor weather forecast information and to check with other school divisions on their final decision for opening schools.

\*The road assessment team reports to the weather operations center by 7:15 a.m. and a final recommendation is made to the superintendent for maintaining the delayed opening or for closing for the day.

### **Time Line At A Glance**

**4 a.m.:** Stafford County Schools weather operations center and road assessment teams begin evaluating weather conditions.

**5:15 a.m.:** Weather operations center staff makes a recommendation regarding closing or delaying school.

**5:30 a.m.:** The superintendent makes the final decision regarding the opening of schools.

**5:30 a.m.:** All television and radio stations in the DC area are notified of the decision.

**5:45 a.m.:** The decision is posted to [www.staffordschools.net](http://www.staffordschools.net), placed on the central office voice mail system at 540/658-6698 and sent to [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com) for notification to registered email and cell phone accounts.

**7:15 a.m.:** The deadline for changing a school delay to a school closing.

On the day following an inclement weather day, parents and students have asked for information regarding whether school is operating on a regular schedule. This year Stafford Schools will post on the website a statement that schools are operating on a regular schedule. As the news media will not announce that we are operating regularly, this is the only way we will be able to communicate this information.

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**For school closing and delay announcements, call 540-658-6698 or check the website at [www.staffordschools.net](http://www.staffordschools.net) or register with [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com) for email and cell phone notifications.**

## WHERE TO FIND SCHOOL CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENTS

All local radio and television stations are informed of school closings and delays.

Families may wish to check with several media sources to verify closing information.

The Stafford Schools' website at [www.staffordschools.net](http://www.staffordschools.net) posts the information as soon as the decision is made. (Remember to "Refresh" or "Reload" each time you visit the site!) Also, the Free-Lance Star's website at [www.fredericksburg.com](http://www.fredericksburg.com) also posts the closings and delays.

### FM Stations:

WFLS 93.3  
WBQB 101.5  
WJYJ 90.5  
WGRQ 95.9  
WMAL 107.3  
WPER 89.9  
WTOP 103.5  
WWUZ 96.9  
WKYS 93.9  
WPGC 95.5

### AM Stations:

WFVA 1230  
WMAL 630

### Television Stations:

WJLA CH 7 ABC  
WRC CH 4 NBC  
WTTG CH 5 FOX  
WUSA CH 9 CBS  
WWBT CH 12 NBC

### Websites:

[www.staffordschools.net](http://www.staffordschools.net)  
[www.fredericksburg.com](http://www.fredericksburg.com)  
[www.wtop.com](http://www.wtop.com)  
[www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com)

## SCHOOLSOUT.COM

Stafford County joined School's Out to provide email notifications to parents and the community. School's Out can distribute closing and delay information to the public regarding Stafford Schools during snowstorms, hurricanes, wind and ice storms, floods, power failures, and even heating and air conditioning failures. This program is provided at no cost to the parents or the school systems that use the School's Out service.

School employees directly update the School's Out site and information flows immediately to registered email accounts. To date, we have more than 5000 registered users receiving information regarding Stafford Schools' closings and delays. If you would like to have email or cell phone notifications, go to [www.schoolsout.com](http://www.schoolsout.com) to register.

## How is the school calendar adjusted for days missed due to inclement weather?

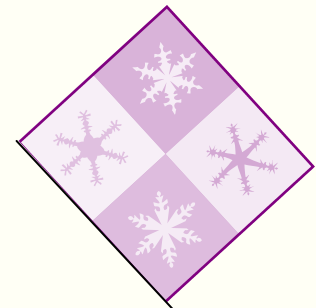
The first five days missed due to inclement weather will be made up by reducing the school year from 180 to 175 days. Days 6-9 will be made up as follows:

**Day 6:** Attend school on February 19

**Day 7:** Attend school on April 6

**Day 8:** Attend school on June 18

**Day 9:** Attend school on June 19



## *Driving In Inclement Weather: Is Your Student Ready?*

Road conditions may not be appropriate for inexperienced drivers during inclement weather.

**Parents** should determine whether their student drivers have the experience to drive in certain road conditions. The school division's decision to close or delay school is based on the ability of our professional school bus drivers to safely transport students to and from school.

School administrators and parents are to be aware that School Board Policy 6-10 allows parents the option of not sending their child to school during inclement weather when, in the parent's judgment, conditions in their neighborhood are unsafe. In such cases, upon notification by the parent, the student will receive an excused absence. The student will be required to make up any work missed.